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Forbidden Realms

Okay, got it



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Meditation Versus Ritual

Magical Evocation: Part 2



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unday morning, several years ago. An SUV slams into my car at fifty miles per hour. I can still see it vividly today, the ruby-colored paint job and the massive chrome grill rushing at me just a split second before the world explodes.

It hit my passenger side door. All of the windows shattered. My whole car was instantly bent into the shape of a boomerang. I still remember the odd little grunting sound I made as the seat belt dug into my right side, forcing the air from my right lung. My car spun around, skidded out of the intersection, and parked itself neatly into a parallel parking spot in front of a gas station.

I pulled my self upright in the car seat and tried to take a breath. The wind had been knocked out of me, and chunks of glass were raining down out of my hair. Who would have thought that little pieces of glass were so heavy? The ruby-colored plastic bumper was lying in pieces all over the road amidst other pieces of unrecognizable black plastic and broken glass.

Both I and the driver of the other car were unhurt. I had just a tiny scratch on one of my knuckles where the flying glass had managed to puncture the skin. Even so, this car accident turned out to be quite a shock to my system. It would soon give me a lesson in post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

The next day, I was tutoring at the college where I work. Right in the middle of listening to my student read aloud, the SUV hit me again. It seemed so real. And it was *loud* — as though the SUV and my car's passenger cabin had instantly materialized and collided right there on top of us at the table. I could even hear the *krunk* of the plastic bumper rupturing. I could see the scintillating spray of broken glass. And there it was again, that unnerving little grunting sound I made as the wind got crushed out of my lungs. It was almost a mechanical sound.

My student didn't notice what had just happened. I shook my head as though dizzy, ignoring the phantom SUV, and I resumed focusing as he read. Chilly droplets of sweat formed on my back. My effort to pretend that nothing had happened didn't work, though. Within seconds, I got hit again. And then again. Fortunately, when it was my turn to begin reading aloud, the SUV behaved itself and kept at a distance. But later that day, I got hit several more times. What the hell was going on?

PTSD was new to me, but it actually didn't rattle me that much. I had already been practicing Hermetic Kabbalah for over twenty years. I was familiar with the meddlesome activity of "spirits," those odd little hallucinations that result from daily invocation and banishing rituals. It's not unusual for students of the occult to feel things that aren't physically there. We get a tap on the shoulder and turn around to find there's no one there. Or sometimes we hear voices in our heads. I once woke up in the middle of the night and felt someone lying in bed with me — I then snapped fully awake to the sound of fading laughter and a tingling sensation rushing all over my body. There was no one there. There are sometimes visual experiences too. I remember one autumn morning when I was leaving for work. I grabbed my keys and turned around to head for the front door...and there was a goat with a human face standing in the hallway. Just for moment and it was gone. These weird phenomena are not demons from hell — as various religions might prefer to say. They are normal parts of yourself — and normal parts of the world — which sometimes get stirred to life when you are practicing mystical disciplines that hasten your progress toward enlightenment. These spirits go bump in the night and speak to us all the time, but our modernized ego usually keeps us locked up in a mental box, in complete ignorance of them.

The phantom SUV was just such a spirit. It didn't have the features of a shamanic power animal, like goat horns or eagle wings. It was a bit more conventional as far as hallucinations go. But I marveled at how powerful the experience of it was. How rich in detail and how absolutely clear! What did this spirit want from me? Clearly something was urgent.

When I got home that day, I took off my office clothes, showered, and put on a cotton robe. I stood barefoot, silent, and still on the rug in the middle of my study, and then began a simple Tantric ritual. I drew an imaginary circle on the rug around my body and sat down. "Come and get me, demon," I said, calling out for the spirit to appear.

It did not come so easily, so I recalled every bit of the car accident I could. Gradually, I began to sense the reason why I was being haunted. In my imagination, the spirit seemed to cringe and hide, like it was hurt and afraid. I thought I heard it whimper: "I can be killed so easily. My body is just a physical object. It can be crushed by other objects."

This was not a truth I was really at peace with, but it was an obvious truth nonetheless. I sighed and simply accepted it. The let-down of it. The falling away of my youthful illusions of invincibility. I felt a sadness not just for my own mortal predicament but for the predicament of all mortal beings on the planet. How many people are crushed to death every day? Each morning, when the alarm clock chimes, it's important to realize that we are once again experiencing the world in terms of the physical body, and that this body is vulnerable. That this day — even this very moment — could be our last. You never know what might come barreling at you. A flowerpot tumbling from a twelfth-story balcony. An aggressive tiger shark. A speeding bus.

And that was that. The phantom SUV never bothered me again.

Clearly, the Tantric ritual that I used kicked some butt. It's a powerful technique for uprooting suffering. When recurring thoughts, fears, or worries are bothering you and sabotaging your happiness, you can use Tantric methods to conjure them up and make peace with them. Permanently.

What does this mean? Well, when it comes to the quest for enlightenment, you don't necessarily need meditation to put an end to suffering. You can use magic.

The Problem with “Meditation”

When you meditate, the goal is to stop thinking, right? This is a common misconception, and even as a Zen guru might explain to you that there's more to meditation than shutting off the voices in your head, he will nonetheless end up convincing you that you have a "monkey mind" — the little chatterbox in your brain that keeps commenting on, worrying about, and passing judgment on everything you do.

The monkey mind, your guru will say, must be silenced. Each time your thoughts drift away during meditation, that's your monkey mind, and the appropriate response should be to thank the monkey mind for sharing, disregard it, and resume your focus.

That's meditation, right? The practice of “stilling the mind.” Practiced daily, it can produce slow, hard-won results over time. So slow, in fact, that Hindu and Buddhist traditions alike, for the most part, claim that it takes a human being many lifetimes of meditation (and good behavior) to achieve enlightenment. This is supposedly true

because almost all human beings have an overwhelming amount of karma to process and work through. That is, ordinary humans have so many misconceptions, so much bad learning, so much accumulated conditioning — eons upon eons of lives spent wallowing in ignorance — that we must spend eons upon eons working our way out of it.

This idea, of course, is rubbish, and I think many Tantric practitioners would agree. We may very well have millions of years of conditioning, and countless eons of evolutionary trauma in our genetic makeup, but that does not mean we must spend an equal amount of time digging our way out of it. The practice of Tantra, if you are capable of understanding it and wielding it, can cut through millions of years of ignorance *in mere seconds*.

I've noticed that modern-day gurus tend to speak about the monkey-mind as though the monkey is just a metaphor. As though he does not really exist. Each time they say "Observe your thoughts," I question the depth of their insight. You see, I find the monkey himself much more interesting than the thought bubble that's hovering over his head. I don't want to deal just with "my thoughts." I'd rather go deep and deal directly with the monkey. *What does he look like? What does he want? And more importantly, what does he really need? And furthermore, how will he feel when he gets what he needs?*

Does this sound absurd? The above four questions are paraphrased from a book called Feeding Your Demons by Tsultrim Allione. More accurately, they come to us today because of an 11th century Tantric ritual developed in Tibet. Allione has brilliantly adapted these questions from the old Tibetan rite so that they are more succinct, direct, and powerful. I consider her questions essential to the practice of summoning spirits.

What? Am I seriously about to explore the use of Tantric magic so you can conjure monkeys from the netherworld? Well yes, but more than that actually. There are many other creatures down there in your mind, churning in the depths of humanity's collective consciousness. Some are hairy. Others scaly. Some are worm-like and slimy. And some might even come forth in the form of a speeding SUV. These creatures within us are very much alive. And they are not in the least bit hidden from our view.

We just think we can't see them anymore because modernity has us locked up in an imaginary "external world."

Let the Magic Begin

Tantric magic is essentially an ancient, underground tradition of biohacking. It employs many physical methods for manipulating the body and mind — the likes of which you've already seen in this [publication](#): breath work, exposure to the elements, fasting, silence, darkness, etc. Tantra also includes meditation, yes, but it goes further. It involves the more powerful and fantastical practices of incantation, conjuration, and necromancy. In this article, we will explore conjuration, or the practice of evoking demons.

"That is the foundation of warriorship and the basis of conquering fear. We have to face our fear; we have to look at it, study it, work with it, and practice meditation with it."

— Chögyam Trungpa

If Tantric techniques are so powerful, then why is Tantric magic such a forbidden realm? Why doesn't everyone conjure demons, walk naked in the snow, practice dizzying breath work, or use sex to reach higher states of consciousness? Well, Tantra is considered a "dark art" because it works. Think about it. Magic that actually gets results is a bit scary.

What is Tantra good at? It undoes what the religion of conformity has done to you. It removes the conditioning of civilization. Brings you back to your true nature. Naturally, the teachers, priests, and landlords who have been working with you all this time will not be pleased when you wake up and get out from under their yoke. *And neither will you* — that is, if you've been brainwashed into their status-quo mindset. The tiniest bit of results from a breath work session — or a magical ritual — can scare the wits out of you and send you running back to your regular attendance of church on Sundays.

"Children will always be afraid of the dark, and men with minds sensitive to hereditary impulse will always tremble at the thought of the hidden and fathomless worlds of strange life which may pulsate in the gulfs beyond the stars, or press hideously upon our own globe in unholy dimensions which only the dead and the moonstruck can glimpse."

—H.P. Lovecraft

What's the difference between mainstream religion and Tantra? Religion can be helpful, of course. It helps keep you conscious of morality. It strives to keep us all safe beneath the glow of the city's artificial light. Safely within the confines of civility. There, it can keep an eye on us and make sure we're well-behaved. Or to use another metaphor, if the mind is a pool of water, religion is what keeps us in the shallow end.

The deep end is too dangerous, right? Only the most powerful mystics, such as Christ or the Prophet Mohammad or Buddha, are allowed to dive down and wrestle with monsters in the deep end. Who are you to think you could possibly take on such a task? Because of religion's efforts to keep you safe and well-behaved, it keeps you away from the more challenging task that is constantly looming before you, the task of confronting monsters in the dark. It keeps you unseasoned in the face of your own deep wildness. Paranoid in the face of evil.

Midnight. A police officer comes across a drunken man on his hands and knees, searching the grass near a lamppost. He asks him what he's looking for. The crawling man grumbles something about losing his car keys.

"I don't see anything," says the policeman. "Are you certain you dropped your keys here?"

"No, I lost them somewhere across the street."

"What? Why are you looking here?" asks the irritated officer.

"The light is much better here..."

— traditional proverb

The Shallowness of Meditation

Because religious "officials" often supervise you as we take up the practice of meditation, it is likely that their religion will try to play it safe and keep you in the shallow end of the pool. It will have you focusing on the most superficial level of the mind: your thoughts.

Don't get me wrong. Working with your thoughts can be useful. I consider it a must, and sometimes it's all we have time for. But working with your thoughts alone is not enough. That is, it's not enough if you want to reach enlightenment in a single lifetime.

Your complaints about traffic. Your nagging, overbooked to-do list. Your silent judging of others and the harsh criticisms you level against your reflection in the bathroom mirror. These ugly manifestations of your brain are not really the roots of your troubles. I know it's tempting to believe that *thinking* is the problem because thinking is fairly easy to examine as it erupts on the surface of the mind. But where does the turbulence on the surface come from? There's something else "unseen" in the deep end of the pool. There's something far more spooky down there than your thoughts.

How deep is it? Well, there's an abyss down there. A bottomless pit filled with limitless magic, power, and wonder — and the limitless possibilities of who you really are, deep down. The vibrant possibilities of life. And yes, it's an abyss teeming with more than just a few monsters.

Lord Gizo Evoking Demons (artist unknown)

Compassion for Monsters

Before I show you an easy-to-do procedure for conjuring demons, we must deal with civilization's biggest mistake in regard to "monsters." To put it simply, civilization has a bad habit of demonizing demons. It makes monsters out of our monkeys. It tries to conquer the primitive mind and subdue it. Or even worse, it tries to pretend that everything is just fine and that monsters in the deep don't exist.

First, I should make it clear that demons are not literally "out there" somewhere, waiting to open a hyperspace portal, jump into your magic circle, and claw you to pieces. Demons may look that way sometimes because they arise in the mind from ancient, terrifying memories. To be more accurate, the demons that haunt us are manifestations of trauma. They are personifications of past hurt. A demon is an old scenario that has taken on the form of a creature in the mind. Often this creature stalks you because it needs something. It needs release.

To be clear, I'm not saying that our demons are "just" old memories. I'm not reducing them to mere symbols or abstractions. Demons are much more alive inside us than we might like to believe. They are very much alive inside the world itself, and they have motives, feelings, and lives of their own. Most of them are far older than a car accident

I experienced a few years ago. Almost all are older than than you or me. Many are older than humanity itself, which makes them seem immortal in comparison.

Sometimes the Cure Is Contaminated with the Sickness

The modern mind is obsessed with keeping us focused on the surface world. Hence the problem of materialism. Modernity has difficulty handling darkness, negativity, and depth. Worse yet, our modernistic belief system is insidious. Even as we try to get away from it, it still tends to dominate everything we do. When we return to the ancient modalities of healing — such as magic and meditation — we nonetheless end up revising these ancient modalities in terms of modernistic reasoning. Most New Age practitioners and occultists suffer from this problem.

“We cannot solve our problems with the same thinking we used when we created them.”

— Albert Einstein

In the last article, I quoted Israel Regardie. In his classic text, *The Tree of Life*, Regardie takes an imperious tone as he describes the practice of working with demons: “It is only by giving [demons] a visible appearance...that the magician is able to dominate them and do with them as he pleases.” Here Regardie shows the typical arrogance of a modernized occultist. Regardie was a child of the Victorian era, heavily influenced by the worldview of British Colonialism. And Regardie was also a Hermetic Kabbalist and alchemist, working within a system of magic that had, for the most part, lost sight of its roots in ancient shamanism. He was practicing a form of magic tainted with the ignorance of modernity.

Just as a British Colonialist might “discover” a new part of the world, assert his pretentious air of moral superiority over the “primitive” inhabitants, and then put them to work for slave wages in his factory, so does the high-minded magician attempt to conquer and play overlord with the primitive parts of the human mind.

Colonialists Playing Overlord with the Local “Primitives” (artist unknown)

When we live primarily in our civilized heads, we don't behave in a very civil manner toward the pre-civilized parts of the psyche. We encounter the “primitive” impulses in the primordial depths of ourselves and immediately judge them and impose orderly tasks upon them. We belittle them into mental illnesses or try to re-educate them and constrain them into generating wealth for us. We try to use them as a means to an end.

A Magician Playing Overlord with Elemental Spirits
Cover of Manly P. Hall's **Unseen Forces that Affect Our Lives** 1924

This abuse of our demons was nothing new in Regardie's time (the early 20th Century). It isn't just us moderns who have this tendency. The habit of asserting moral superiority was begun thousands of years before our time. King Solomon is legendary for his ability to trap demons and force them to build his roads, bridges, and palaces. Humanity's disdain for demons began, perhaps, over 10,000 years ago when agriculture appeared and we started living in city states. It began when we started living in rectangular boxes and thinking of ourselves as something superior to nature.

Over 2,500 years ago, Gotama, the Buddha, suffered from the same corrupted attitude. He was born a prince, after all, and when he abandoned his palace to seek enlightenment, he unwittingly brought his high-minded, princely thinking with him. He assumed, as many a royal snob might do, that the mind and body are primitive monsters — unruly things that need to be beaten down and subdued by extreme forms of discipline. The group of ascetics with whom he started working also had this attitude. The spirituality of Gotama's time, largely dominated by Brahmanism, had already become corrupted by the arrogance of the civilized mindset. No one seemed to know the way to enlightenment anymore. Gotama's extreme forms of asceticism almost destroyed his body. However, at some point, saner heads prevailed. When he had wasted away to a mere skeleton, he had to concede that he didn't know what he was doing. Back to the drawing board.

And so Gotama thought back to his childhood to find his earliest inspiration. What was it that had inspired him to put an end to human suffering? Could he find the answer in a memory? A time of his life before he had adopted the affectations of a prince? Perhaps. It seemed that when he was just a mere toddler, he had indeed glimpsed enlightenment...

When Gotama was very young, his father, the King, took him to see the ceremonial plowing of the fields before the planting of next year's crops. The custom was that all of the men took part in this ceremony —merchants, nobles, royalty, and farmers alike. The king left his son in the care of nurse maids. However, these women wanted to watch the king's participation in the commencement ceremony, so they left young Gotama unattended for just a few moments. That was enough.

From beneath the soothing shade of a rose apple tree, Gotama finally got some solitude. He saw that it was a beautiful day, and his spirit was naturally lifted. He immediately sat up and basked in the azure glow of the sky, the sounds of joyous laughter washing over him from the people plowing the fields, and the rich scent of the dark, upturned earth. His eyes settled upon the freshly plowed soil in the field before him. He noticed a colony of ants that had been disturbed by the passing plow. The ants' eggs had become exposed, and they lay scattered about in the sunlight in disarray. The ants swarmed over them frantically to restore order to their decimated home. Gotama's heart went out to the poor creatures. He felt suddenly as though they

were his own family. He forgot his separate human self in that moment and experienced something that some yogis spend years of discipline to achieve. He became “nothing special.”

And so it was that the adult Gotama, hearkening back to his childhood, remembered a key ingredient to enlightenment. He rediscovered what the ascetics of his time had forgotten. This was a fundamental turning point for him on his path to Nirvana. He had discovered compassion.

Between Mind and Matter, the Heart

Often when Buddhists promote compassion, they are speaking in terms of religion. They mean compassion as a means of keeping mankind well-behaved and safe from evil. Compassion as a moral virtue. This is not what Gotama had found. His use of compassion had little to do with being a good person. He found that compassion was a tool for achieving oneness with the universe. Sure, we might become kinder, gentler human beings as a result, but that was incidental.

In the last [article](#), I mentioned “the wound of Amfortas.” This is the wound that cripples the king in the medieval Grail legend. As the legend goes, there is only one thing on Earth that is capable of healing the Fisher King’s wound. A simple question. The Grail knight, Percival, manages to magically heal King Amfortas by using compassion to cut through the enchantment that is keeping his kingdom desolate. He forgets all propriety, forgets his station in society, and speaks out of turn. Spontaneously from his heart, he asks the king, “What ails thee, brother?”

The Grail king, of course, is you. You see, the problem of civilization is that we have become separated from the Earth. The chasm that exists between king and servant, between human being and Earth, between you and your true nature—the deep gash that cuts us off from our innate oneness with the universe — *that* is the wound of Amfortas. It is the split between mind and matter. Curiously, there are only two things that can heal this wound: death and compassion.

When you sit to meditate, you've got the Earth beneath you and your brain hovering above it in your skull. Between your brain and the Earth is the missing ingredient required for enlightenment: your heart. It is the heart that bridges the gap between the high-mindedness of an arrogant prince and the Earth beneath him. This is what Gotama rediscovered when he found the way to enlightenment. Throughout all of his early efforts on the path, he had been looking down his nose at his own Earthly nature. He had been objectifying it. Making a problem out of it. Defining it as though it were some kind of exotic, alien nut that must be cracked. Or as an annoying veil that must be violently ripped asunder. He had been beating up his imaginary lower nature with an imaginary superior nature. This aggressive approach only served to distance him further and further from what he was seeking. In his objectification and denigration of his own body, he had been doing the opposite of what was required.

Gotama Touching the Earth (artist unknown)

This is why I've been saying that civilization has us cut off from the deeper parts of ourselves. It has put us in the shallows of the brain and has us shrinking away from the depths. The depths of the Earth below us. Nature. When we make meditation into a “mental” activity, we get stuck in our heads. We end up “stuck-up,” as it were. And we end up shutting off the flow of vitality that rises from the Earth, from the very source of our power.

The creatures down in those depths do not need to be beaten, caged, and subjugated. They need to be loved. Evocation, in this light, is similar to the act of plowing the Earth to reveal the “ants” thriving within it. It’s a way of conjuring forth those parts of ourselves that have been wronged by civilization’s split from reality. Don’t be surprised at the monstrous appearance of those creatures. They are demonic not because they are evil but because we have been demonizing them and neglecting them for millennia. And when you summon them forth in all their hideousness, there is only one thing to do. Love them.

Once Gotama had discovered this, he began to take care of himself again. He tasted proper food and restored his body back to health. He then proceeded to do an interesting magical ritual. Most Buddhist scholars simply report that he sat down under a tree and began concentrating his mind. They would have you believe that his enlightenment was merely a mental achievement. But meditation is not all that he did. He involved his body and his imagination. Before he sat down to meditate, he practiced a magical ritual. He conjured demons.

The Buddha’s Conjurations

Essentially, Gotama drew a circle around himself and conjured up four demons, one for each of the cardinal directions. These are known today not so much as spirits but more as abstract concepts: the four *jhanas*. The four immeasurable realms.

These four demons represent the primary “errors” of perception that create an unenlightened mind. When a demon arises in perception, it presents itself face-to-face to you. It presents itself as an affront. In doing so, it either appears as something you’re afraid of or as something you really want. Think about it. There really are no examples of spirits that represent anything else. All of them represent either fear or desire. There are spirits of wealth and good fortune. There are savior spirits and guardian spirits. There are *incubi* and *succubi*, demons of desire that tempt you with sex. There are demons of money, such as *Mammon*. And demons of gluttony. And of course, there are demons that arise from our deep evolutionary memories of violence, with horns, fangs, barbs, whips, etc.

Demons arise this way because our nervous system has evolved to deal with the world in a face-to-face manner. In our animal aspect, we are designed, first and foremost, to be affronted. This sense of being affronted, face-to-face with some kind of

environmental “problem” — this face off between self and world — is the root scenario which produces the suffering, unenlightened mind. It is the core trauma of our species. The painful gash between self and world. All other traumas are based upon it. In a previous [article](#), I give a detailed story of how this core trauma developed.

When you are suffering, the solution is simple. The disquieting appearance of the “problem” — the face of the problem — is your own face. Your nervous system has turned a life situation into an offense by seeing it as an affront. It feels like it’s “in your face,” as it were. The painful split that the human ego experiences between itself and the world manifests as a face-to-face confrontation characterized as a self and an other. My own face inside my own make-believe circle of existence and the face of the demon’s in the big bad world out there. Gotama visualized himself face-to-face with such demons all around him.

This may sound silly and superstitious, but you have to remember that our minds function in this “superstitious” way all the time. If I’m driving home from work, making good time on the expressway, and then suddenly I run into a traffic jam, I might say something like, “Oh, come on. You’ve got to be kidding me!” Who am I talking to? The world presents itself to us like this all the time. It appears to be teaming with living motives and scheming powers, as though it’s conspiring against us, provoking us into anger and despair. And so, we end up talking to a traffic jam as though it’s a demon.

Is the world “out there” really like that? Answering yes or no to this metaphysical question will not help. We do not really know what the world “out there” is like. What we do know is that the world arises in our experience in a personified manner. Animism is alive and well in us, no matter how modernized we think we’ve become. The sensation of being affronted by reality is quite real, and very much alive for us.

In this sense, demons are not “real,” of course. At least not literally. But then again, demons are quite devastatingly real as living psychological forces within the soul of the world. Just ask someone who’s suffering from PTSD what it feels like to be “hounded.” Even when we don’t suffer from the acute demonic possession of PTSD, demons hammer at us from all sides nonetheless, reinforcing a vague sense of victimization and inadequacy. Our sense of separateness from the universe. The secret of magical evocation is that we learn to work with demons on their own terms. In their own non-

literal realm of psychic reality. As psychological phenomena that arise from the very fabric of our perceived reality.

Naturally then, the way to achieve oneness with the universe is to remove the gap between self and all. To eliminate the imaginary scenario of affrontedness. There are four demons that assisted Gotama to do this. Each demon was a personification of four imaginary problems in the world:

1. The spirit of “the enemy” (which gives the world a threatening appearance)
2. The spirit of suffering (which might make us look down on beings less fortunate than ourselves)
3. The spirit of happiness (which leads us to chase after happiness in external circumstances, or to feel jealous of others who appear happy)
4. The spirit of attraction and repulsion (This final spirit is the master of the other three, and it keeps us lost in delusion.)

One at a time, Gotama extended the feeling of compassion to whatever form each of these four demons presented. There was no limit to the forms they might take, and Gotama found himself beaming compassion at all kinds of creatures in all kinds of threatening and enticing forms. Slowly, day by day, he dissolved the sense of affrontedness erected between himself and the world.

When his compassion was extended to these many beings, it took on four simple forms, respectively:

1. Friendship
2. Sympathetic sorrow
3. Sympathetic joy
4. Equanimity

These are usually referred to as the four immeasurable realms because Gotama’s use of compassion tended to dissolve both the demon and himself. All that remained after that was boundless, immeasurable awareness, a sense of limitless space and light

without end. The dissolution of the ego's boundaries brings about the feeling of total connection to the universe in which there is no end to who and what you are. This is enlightenment.

Hermetic occultists reading this article will note a strong similarity between the four immeasurable realms and the conjuration of the four archangels of north, south, east, and west. Many traditions the world over make use of this visualization of spirits in the four cardinal directions. Some scholars would say that there must have been some kind of original shamanic tradition from which all these practices have sprung. I tend to think that the conjuration of spirits from four directions simply results from how our nervous system has evolved. It's a four-fold schematic that represents how we function in our physical form as terrestrial creatures who walk around on the surface of a solid planet Earth.

What exactly is the Buddha's compassion? How does it produce enlightenment? Examining the English word will help make it clear. The first part, "com-," literally means "with" or "together." Then there's the second part, "-passion," which obviously means "powerful feeling." Conventionally, "com-passion" means that we experience another person's feelings together with him or her. When the other person feels passion, I feel it too. Simple empathy.

This ability to resonate with others goes far beyond just people. We can feel a sympathetic connection to animals too, of course. And it is also possible to rediscover our compassion for trees and rivers, and clouds that formulate and evaporate in the sky, as well as rocks that go *krick*, *klok*, and *clunk* as they tumble down the side of a mountain. Or speeding SUVs that come barreling out of God-knows-where. Or any other supposedly inanimate object that arises in our experience. Most importantly, compassion helps us feel how our demons feel. You feel how a demon gets triggered into manifestation, why it has come forth, and what it wants. The demon likewise learns about you. It feels how you have come into being in order to face it.

That last sentence is of crucial importance. Note that it is not the *demon* that is the problem. Nor is it you. It's the entire scenario that is producing the suffering. This magical confrontation has nothing to do with the powers of light facing down the powers of darkness. *Both sides are dark*. Both parties must work this out together. If you adopt the attitude of a wise, saintly Jesus, healing this poor, wretched creature with the

power of your superior love, you are failing to see your own role in your suffering. Your own wretchedness. You will fall into the trap of arrogance.

Ultimately, extending compassion toward a demon will help it to resolve its characteristic trauma and make peace with it. And finally it will help it to dissolve or sink back into the universe. To disappear back into pure potentiality. Once the demon dissolves, it is not necessarily “dead.” That doesn’t really matter. What matters is that the demon is less likely to get triggered and rise into your awareness again. Or if it does rise again, it is less likely to trouble you and more likely to serve you and give you strength.

And of course, that’s not all. There’s another demon to deal with here. It must also learn how to sink back down into the universe. That demon is you. Your ego. When this demon dissolves, you die a psychosomatic death. Your affronted, offended self settles down into boundless awareness and disappears. You become enlightened. At least for a while.

Sure, you will disappear into boundless bliss, but it most likely won’t last. The ego will rise again, triggered into manifestation by some minor or major affront. The cycle of suffering will reformulate itself. This might even happen the moment you leave your magic circle and feel the imaginary pressures of daily life closing in on you. That other demon that you just helped to dissolve may also, likely, get triggered and rise again. However, continued evocations of demons will help them to rest in peace and never reformulate again. Not only that, but it will also help your ego learn how to disappear back into boundless peace—*and never reformulate again.*

There’s a great dramatization of Gotama’s final enlightenment experience in the movie *Little Buddha*. When Gotama confronts the powerful demon, Mara, he also confronts his own ego. Not only does he help Mara dissolve back into boundless peace, but he then addresses the other demon in the scenario of his suffering— his own ego: “Architect, finally I have met you. You will not rebuild your house again.” Gotama then lets himself go one last time, and he finally becomes the Buddha. Free from the necessity of ego, he achieves permanent liberation from suffering.

Magical Evocation: Hardcore Version

Now that we know the missing ingredient in the magicians craft, it's time to practice magic. Time to conjure a demon.

Before you begin, bring to mind something that is currently causing you to suffer. Recall the specific life situation that triggered the suffering into being. You might also note the scenario that appears inside your mind, in response to the event, if any. For example, if you have a landlord who has threatened to evict you because of a rent dispute, you would conjure up the image of him or her threatening you. In addition, you might also get a brief flash of a frightening image: a titanic flash flood rushing at you from the distance, as the circumstances of your life seem overwhelming and threaten to sweep you away. Both scenarios, the literal one and the triggered one, will help you conjure up the demon.

Step I: Sit in your magic circle

Go to a place where you will not be disturbed. Using a dagger, a wand, or your index finger pointed at the ground, draw an imaginary circle around yourself. Sit down inside your circle and relax. It is important that your spine and head are upright because that is how we (and our many ancestors) have usually encountered many of the past traumas that prod demons into existence. You can use a chair if you like, but I recommend learning how to adopt the "posture of pure awareness" as taught by Reginald Ray in this [video](#). Sitting upright as feelings arise can be very helpful. Feelings often rise literally from the lower parts of your body, up to your head, and you have to learn how to let them rise freely and overtake your whole being.

Step II: Rise to face the demon

Call to mind the life situation, the feeling, or the triggered scenario that is causing you suffering. Face it, relive it, and feel the emotion of it as it flares up in your body. Note where the feeling arises in the body. Note the specifics of the feeling.

1. What is its shape? Texture?
2. What is its temperature?
3. What is its color?

Now see yourself as though your body is merely an extension of the Earth beneath you. The Earth has produced you, and you appear to have arisen in response to this feeling.

The energy or quality of the feeling in your body is what is giving you a purpose in this form, inside this magic circle. You have arisen in this form to face something that has disturbed you. You are going to confront it up here in the world, out in the open.

Step III: The demon rises

Now notice that there is another circle several feet in front of your own. The shape, texture, temperature, and color of your feeling is also rising up out of the Earth there. The qualities of your feeling are materializing there too, into a creature of some kind. If your imagination doesn't take on a life of its own and produce some kind of entity, that's not a problem. Go ahead and create/visualize a creature that seems to embody the qualities of the feeling you have in your own body. Whether you create the creature on your own or the creature appears spontaneously is of little importance. Notice the following:

1. What is the creature's shape? What animal or human qualities does it have? What is its gender? Does it have reptilian scales? Wings? Insect legs? Hair? Teeth? Is it skinny? Or fat? Beefy? Is it moving? Breathing?
2. What kind of limbs does it have, if any?
3. Note the quality of its eyes and the color. How does it regard you?
4. How does it feel? Use compassion. Feel the same emotion rising up into your body. Both of you are being generated upwards by the same ultimate ground of being after all, so both of you are part of the same living, surging feeling.
5. How dense is the demon? Solid? Vaporous? Opaque? Translucent?
6. What is its character or temperament like?
7. Notice something about the creature now that you didn't see before.

Step IV: Three questions

You may ask these questions aloud if you like. When the demon answers each one, feel the demon's emotions surging through your own body, as well as the demon's body.

1. "What do you want?" Note the demon's reply: "What I want is..."
2. "What do you really need?" Note the reply: "What I *really* need is..."
3. "How will you feel if you get what you really need?" Note the reply: "If I get what I really need, I will feel..."

Step V: Feed yourself to the demon

Feel your body dissolving into a sweet nectar. This nectar rises up from the Earth and fills your body, like sap fills a tree. There is an inexhaustible supply of it. And the color of this nectar now changes to characterize the feeling that the demon will experience if it gets what it needs.

Feed the demon. Do this lovingly. See a stream of nectar issuing from your body, toward the demon. Note how the demon takes it in. Through the mouth? Directly into its heart? Through the top of its head? Note also the point of your body from which the nectar is issuing.

What happens as the demon takes in the nectar? Does its shape change? Transform? Fade away? Feed the demon until it is completely satisfied.

Step VI: Final questions

Ask the spirit the following: “Are you a companion spirit?” (If the answer is yes, proceed to the next question. If the answer is no, go to step VII.)

1. “How will you help me?” Answer: “I will help you by...”
2. “What pledge will you make to me?” Answer: “My pledge to you is...”
3. “How can I call upon you?” Answer: “You can call upon me by...”

Step VII: The clear light

The spirit, now completely satisfied with nectar, dissolves into clear radiance and sinks back down into the Earth. The Earth itself has become clear radiance. It is the ultimate ground of being. The light of the spirit, as it dissolves, penetrates into your body, washing through you, purifying you, acting as a catalyst that causes you to likewise dissolve.

You too dissolve now into light and sink down deep into the ultimate ground of being — until you are completely gone, swallowed up and consumed utterly by brilliance. Until there is no barrier seen or felt in any direction. There is nothing but endless, brilliant clarity.

Remain in this state for several minutes.

Magical Evocation: Lite Version

Drawing magic circles and talking to imaginary familiar spirits might be a little too much for some people. Sometimes, there is only so much that our modern mind can take before our conventional jadedness kicks in and we start rolling our eyes.

If hardcore magic feels silly to you but you still want to experience the psychological benefits of an evocation exercise, there is another way.

You can simply take up the pen! Go through the above steps, but do it in the form of a short story. Preferably you would write the story out in the first person, from the point

of view of a sorcerer who enters his conjuring room and summons up a spirit. Describe it vividly, in detail, as prompted by the various steps. Include the dialogue as the sorcerer questions the spirit. Describe feelings, textures, smells, and other details vividly. Push your poetic mind to its utmost limits.

It may be easier for you to do the “lite version” of evocation first, as you get to know how it works. Eventually, you will be able to sit down in a magic circle and go through the procedure through visualization and speaking aloud.

Doing these exercises might not appear that remarkable *while* you are doing them. There is probably no altered state of consciousness achieved. Nor is one required. But you will most likely be amazed at what happens *afterward*. When you go back out into the daily grind, you may be surprised to find that the demon is no longer triggered. It may even be completely gone! Or...the demon, perhaps, is still there, but something has changed. You understand what it wants now, and you're not offended by its triggering scenario anymore. Or perhaps, you are just not afraid anymore. It's no longer about you, thank goodness!

Such results are truly empowering, and it really is possible to permanently wipe out crippling types of anxiety with just one session of magical evocation. At other times, it may take numerous sessions, with the intensity of the suffering diminishing greatly with each session.

In the next article, I'll be discussing some of the other Tantric techniques that Gotama used *after* he did his evocation. After he used magic, that is, he also then settled down to meditate.

What is meditation exactly? You may be surprised to learn that there are forms of meditation that don't really seem like meditation at all. Forms that are so simple and easy to do that you begin to wonder why people say it's all so hard. Tantric and Taoist forms of meditation involve imagination, breathing, and awareness exercises that are much easier than mainstream forms of meditation like “calm abiding” or Zen. Not only

that, but they are far more powerful, capable of bringing you to the brink of enlightenment in mere months, sometimes with the use of imagination alone.

Stay tuned for more!

Meditation

Magick

Tantra

PTSD

Enlightenment